

The Nation

Reviews.

COLOR BOOKS.

- "Edmund Dulac's Picture Book for the French Red Cross. Published for the "Daily Telegraph." (Hodder & Stoughton. 3s. net.)
- "The Songs and Sonnets of William Shakespeare." Illustrated by CHARLES ROBINSON. (Duckworth. 7s. 6d. net.)
- "The Book of Old English Songs and Ballads." Illustrated in Color by ELEANOR FORTESCUE BRICKDALE. (Hodder & Stoughton. 6s. net.)
- "A House of Pomegranates." By OSCAR WILDE. Illustrated by JESSIE M. KING. (Methuen. 12s. 6d. net.)
- "La Vita Nuova." By DANTE ALIGHIERI. Translated by DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI. Pictured by EVELYN PAUL, with Music by ALFRED MERCER. (Harrap. 10s. 6d. net.)
- "The Story of the Tower of London." By RENÉ FRANCIS. Illustrated by LOUIS WEITER. (Harrap. 20s. net.)
- "A Book of Bridges." Pictures by FRANK BRANGWYN. Text by W. SHAW SPARROW. (Lane. 21s. net.)
- "Vigée-Lebrun: Her Life, Work, and Friendships." By W. H. HELM. With a frontispiece in color and other illustrations. (Hutchinson. 21s. net.)

WITH all their variety of subject and manner, the batch of color books in front of us are alike in one respect: all give a great deal for a moderate amount of money. The first three, indeed, including Mr. Dulac's amazing three-shillings' worth, seem almost recklessly cheap, considering the greatly enhanced cost of production; but doubtless both publishers and artists know what they are doing, and this year, at any rate, the comfortable classes are unlikely to measure the desirability of a gift-book by its expensiveness. Mr. Dulac's venture stands, of course, a little apart from the rest. The profits from its sale will be given to the Croix Rouge Française, and for this reason alone it has a claim on public patronage denied to the merely commercial production. Any tolerable book, published with the same object, would have such a claim, and this one is very much better than tolerable. It consists of fairy tales from many sources, and a good sprinkling of songs and stories from the old French. The "Thousand-and-One Nights" and Hans Andersen are laid under contribution; there are curious old-world legends from Egypt and China; of French extraction, Cinderella and Blue Beard may be said to represent the Entente between the childhood of our neighbor's country and our own. Mr. Dulac's pictures are no less various than the text. His style as an illustrator of fairy tales is well enough known not to need description, though a drawing such as that of Layla with the bird on her hand, facing p. 22, would suggest an increase in his decorative courage, and the frankly Chinese flavor of his "Cerberus" may portend the strengthening of the Oriental influence apparent in his art from the first. For the most part, however, these purely imaginative drawings exhibit the pearly quality and tender color to which he has accustomed us. But the application of these characteristics to the *genre* illustrating some of the old French chansons has produced some unexpectedly attractive results. His "Little Seamstress" is both charming in color and informed with a dainty humor. His "Young Rousselle" is a Dickens character with a Gallic grace who attunes himself admirably to the lilting lines of the old ballad:—

"Young Rousselle, he has three fine eyes;
Each is quite of a different size;
One looks east and one looks west,
The third, his eye-glass, is much the best,
Ah! Ah! Ah! truth to tell,
A jolly good chap is Young Rousselle."

"Times are not easy, we know, but being wounded is less easy," says the preface to this volume. Its possession should be the easiest and pleasantest of ways of benevolence.

Our next two books are calculated to fit the temper of the times. A renewed interest in the national poets does not necessarily follow from the new interest in ourselves as a nation, which is just now so conspicuous; but it were surely hard to resist the appeal of so essentially English a product as Shakespeare or of the Songs and Ballads, including some of the best-known of Shakespeare's, that form the subject of the second volume. Mr. Charles Robinson has made a handsome gift-book of the "Songs and Sonnets." Without any radical departure from the well-defined tradition of Shakespeare illustration, he has brought to his task a restrained imagination and a delicate sense of beauty. One boggles a little at the frontispiece—the lark singing at Heaven's gate—as a somewhat formless riot of color that has, perchance, eluded the skill of the printer; but thereafter every picture page has something to commend it. Of special novelty is that facing p. 43, illustrating "These lovers cry, Oh! oh! they die!" in a classic conception, rhythmical in its flowing lines of drapery, rich in its blue and amber contrasts. There is a similar wealth of color and contrast in the woman figure of Time on p. 176; while as a foil to the glowing tints of these and others, a marble-like coolness distinguishes the pictures of "Fair and False" and "A Lover's Complaint." We found ourselves fascinated by the initial letters and tailpieces in this volume: trifles of a uniform shape and pattern, identical all in their grey-blue and white, restful and unostentatious, yet by their very recurrence insistent. The "Old English Songs and Ballads" has for its illustrator one of the best-known of our neo-pre-Raphaelites. We like Miss Brickdale best in such drawings as the frontispiece "Bishop Valentine," the pyramidal "Magnificat," and certain others, where her gift for pure design in resonant color has full scope. Again, the girl head and bust of "Who is Sylvia?" woven into a decorative landscape background, has a breadth and simplicity that her stippled rustic idylls sometimes lack. But the latter are rarely negligible, since the craftsmanship is always fine. Our quarrel is mainly with one or two of them which in sentiment suggest other individualities—Fred Walker, for example, and even Birket Foster.

The new edition of Oscar Wilde's "House of Pomegranates" is admirably illustrated by Miss Jessie King. We say admirably rather than faithfully, because the artist has taken the stories at their face value, which is that of children's tales, and illustrated them accordingly; the strange blend of sumptuous word-painting and psychological analysis with which Wilde infused them, receives no recognition from her. There is no taint of morbidity in these happy drawings, and Miss King's use of the water-color medium enhances their lightheartedness. A favorite device of hers is to leave the point of emphasis in a picture a white blank, and to build up a wall of color round it, as in the "Young King" facing p. 26, where the ethereal central figure owes but a few dainty touches to the brush; but she is not slavishly bound by any formula, and in the pictures to the "Fisherman and his Soul" she attains an almost Dulac-like finish and preciousness. But she returns to the lighter, more sketchy method in the following tale, "The Star Child," and a very successful method it is. These drawings are good art and most excellent water-color painting.

The color plates to the "Vita Nuova" are sound and suitable, perhaps, rather than brilliant; but the volume as a whole need fear no competitor in its own class. It is, indeed, the complete example of the Gift-Book Beautiful. Illumination makes of every page a picture, as in the days when monks laboriously compiled their missals; the paper is

excellent, the type legible, and at the same time in keeping with the atmosphere of old Italian fanes conveyed by the pictures and other details of decoration. A fine memento of the great Italian.

Our last three works belong to a different category, in that not only the pictures, but also the letterpress, are new. They are not less Gift-Books on that account; but they demand a somewhat different treatment from the reviewer. Mr. Weirter's etchings to "The Story of the Tower of London" show a Meryon-like appreciation of the spirit of historical romance, and are wonderfully broad and dignified in treatment, wholly artistic and satisfying records of the Tower; and Mr. Francis's letterpress is full worthy of such illustrations. Mr. Francis acknowledges a debt to Lord Ronald Leveson-Gower, Mr. Poyser, and others who in recent times have written eloquently about the great London monument; but in truth his own work is quite distinctive from these. His method is historical in the best sense; that is, he probes the significance of history as well as extracts the facts; and the inner significance of the Tower of London is greater than the importance of any number of the judicial murders that took place within its walls.

Mr. Shaw Sparrow's "Book of Bridges" is undoubtedly an "art" book, in virtue of Mr. Brangwyn's pictures; but it is also a new work of considerable literary interest, a study of bridges from the engineering, architectural, and social points of view in all parts of the world, and a theory of the whole origin and purpose of bridges. This theory is, briefly, that the main use of bridges to the human race is a military use, and that every bridge of possible strategic importance ought to be built with a view to possible defensive warfare. Our modern commercial bridges, therefore, built by peace-imagining engineers—a rather impossible people, in Mr. Sparrow's opinion, unless they happen to have the artist's gift of vision—in times of peace, and without any protection against aircraft, are absurdities. Artistic absurdities many of them are. But the main proposition is a big one, and much too contentious to be dealt with in a small space.

Mr. Helm's *Life of Madame Vigée-Lebrun* is full of good reading matter about a woman who, in our opinion, is much more interesting in herself than in her pictures. As an artist, she achieved an extraordinary success in an age remarkable for the shallow insipidity of public taste; she held it to the end by virtue of her personal qualities, and still holds it to some extent by reason of the attractive romance of her career. Socially, Madame Vigée-Lebrun did nothing wrong, unless it was her marriage to the wrong husband, as M. Lebrun undoubtedly was; artistically, she was the Court painter *par excellence*. There is truth, though Mr. Helm combats it, in the saying that her famous pictures of Marie Antoinette are flatteries, not portraits; even so, the talent to flatter is not one to be accounted lightly, nor does it disqualify her for a serious English memoir such as Mr. Helm has written. He has done his work thoroughly, even to a catalogue *raisonné* of the artist's works, and the book is finely illustrated in half-tone and photogravure.

WONDERLAND.

- "Russian Folk Tales." By LEONARD A. MAGNUS. (Kegan Paul. 7s. 6d. net.)
- "Russian Fairy Tales." By R. NISBET BAIN. (Hartap. 7s. 6d. net.)
- "Byliny Book: Hero Tales of Russia." By MARION CHILTON HARRISON. (Heffer. 1s. 6d. net.)
- "Still More Russian Picture-Tales." By VALERY CARRICK. (Blackwell. 2s. 6d. net.)
- "Fairy Tales of Eastern Europe." By JEREMIAH CURTIN. (McBride, Nast. 3s. 6d. net.)
- "Ottoman Wonder Tales." By LUCY M. GARNETT. (Black. 6s.)
- "Indian Fairy Stories." By DONALD A. MACKENZIE. (Blackie. 3s. 6d.)
- "The Orient Pearls." By SHOYONA DEVI. (Macmillan. 2s. 6d. net.)
- "Where Animals Talk." By ROBERT H. NASSAU. (Duckworth. 2s. 6d. net.)

CHILDREN and all child-like peoples devise for themselves a

wonder-world beyond and behind the real world—a land east of the sun, west of the moon—a land, to quote one of the stories in Mr. Bain's book "far, far behind the blue sea, behind the fiery abyss in the void places, in the midst of the pleasant meadows." These words are full of the enchantment of Russian magic, and may serve as a sort of key-note to all these books. The Russians are a people of dreamers. Michelet says somewhere that they are really a southern people, lost and shivering in the waste solitudes of the North, and that their one dream and longing is the sun. He instances the diminutives, of which Russian is even fuller than Italian, as a proof of their essentially southern character. The Russian wonderland is full of gorgeous color. Old Russia dreamed of blue seas, of enchanted islands, of sacred cities, of cypress woods, of silver ships, of marble belfries. The nurses lulled the Tsarevitch Alexis to sleep with songs and stories of all these things. Into this wonder-world all the books mentioned above introduce the reader.

In his introduction, Mr. Magnus points out "the peculiar conventions in the narration":—

"Such are the little forewords with their sardonic musings; the conclusion of almost every happy tale that the narrator was at the feast, but might never taste the viands; the references to the distances which the hero must go, which the narrator has not the knowledge to estimate accurately; the references to the land of these wonderful happenings 'the thrice-ninth land, the thrice-tenth kingdom,' and many other traditional stylisms."

These refrains occur continually in the narrative. To quote an example from the "Tale of Ivan Tsarevitch":—

"And as he went on the road and way—it may be near, it may be far, it may be high, it may be low, the tale is soon told, but the deed is not soon done—at last he reached an open field and green meadows."

This suggests that the manner of the telling of these tales is an exact and beautiful art, handed down by tradition from generation to generation. They are not told by anybody in any haphazard sort of way, but the telling of them is no doubt a ritual. The raconteur, more probably the raconteuse, is the possessor of a long-descended art. We listen to Babouchka in the long winter evenings. We see the traditional gestures that she makes, the quick expressive motion of her hands—we hear the peculiar cadences of her recitative—the quick hurrying over of the ever-repeated refrain, "It may be long, it may be short," and the like—the pausing and dramatic intensity at the crucial points of the story. The wonders she tells take place not only at great distances in space, "the thrice-ninth lands, the thirtieth kingdom," but also in time "beyond distant times." It is often said. All this fantastic world is a setting for the legendary heroes, and saints, and the holy shrines of Russia. We give ourselves up to the spell, and sail down the sacred river and see the sacred domes of Kieff.

In these Russian fairy-tales, as Mr. Magnus points out, there are no "fairies" in the Teutonic or Celtic sense of a separate race of beings. He adds that there are no personifications of Nature. We do not think this last observation is borne out by an examination of these books taken altogether. There is, for example, the delightful story of "The Twelve Months," in the late Mr. Curtin's "Fairy Tales of Eastern Europe." (There is, by the way, in the introduction to this book a most interesting account of Mr. Curtin's life and work. We confess his name is new to us. He seems to have been a linguist and student worthy to be ranked with Borrow, and Barton, and Palmer, and Neale.) In this story Marushka is sent in mid-winter by her wicked step-mother and step-sister into the forest to find violets. She wanders in the deep snow, weeping bitterly:—

"At last off in the distance, she saw a bright light. She went towards it, and ascending a hill she came to a fire; around the fire on twelve stones, sat twelve men; three old men with long white beards, three somewhat younger, three in years of manhood, and three beautiful youths. They were sitting in silence and looking calmly on the fire. They were the Twelve Months . . . December rose from his seat, went to the youngest month and said, 'Brother March, sit in the first place.' March took the highest place, and waved the sceptre above the fire; that instant the fire

burned more powerfully. The snow thawed; buds appeared on the branches, and grass grew green beneath the trees—flowers began to open—Spring had come. In the thickets violets were blooming; there were so many that they were like a blue carpet. "Quick, Marushka, pick them," said March."

The next day Marushka is sent for strawberries, and June performs the same service for her, and the day following for apples, which are provided by September. The word pictures of the times of violets, of strawberries, and of apples are very charming.

The stories frequently turn on the possession by the hero or heroine of some object which is "fée," that is, endowed with magical properties. There is, for instance, the story of "the Silver Saucer and the Crystal Apple," possessed by the Little Fool:—

"She whispered, 'Roll, roll, little Apple, on the silver saucer, and show me all the cities and the fields, all the woods and the seas, and the heights of the hills and the fairness of heaven.' Then the apple rolled about on the saucer; a transparency came over the silver; and on the saucer one after the other, all the cities became visible, all the ships on the seas, and the regiments in the fields, and the heights of the mountains and the beauties of the sky. Sunset appeared after sunset, and the stars gathered in their nocturnal dances; it was all so beautiful and so lovely as no tale can tell and no pen can write."

This last phrase, by the way, is one of the recurring refrains. Russian folk-fancy is full of the desire to evoke the vision of the fair distant world—"the white world," they call it. A more uncommon means of doing this than the use of a crystal globe or magic mirror is told of in one of Mr. Curtin's tales, "The Town of Nothing." This was a dulcimer, if one string of which was touched the blue sea would come; if a second, ships would sail; if the third, men would fire cannon from the ships. The present writer confesses that since the beginning of the war he has meditated a ballad, which has never taken actual shape, which should turn on the possession of a magical mirror by the Kaiser, in which were to be seen the sights of land and sea. He looks in it, and sees, now frozen corpses in deep snow; now a woman killed at midnight in a dark prison; now a great church in flames; now a stretch of the Adriatic on which floats a wrecked fishing-boat of Chioggia, with torn butterfly sails, while the blue water runs red with the blood of Beppino, the curly-headed, whistling fisher-boy. The fate of the Emperor is somehow bound up with that of the mirror, so that when it is broken his evil power comes to an end.

These books are full of the most curious Russian folk-lore, and cast great light on the popular Russian religion. The three Holy Persons who ceaselessly walk the roads of the Russian land are Christ Himself, St. Nicholas, the wonder-worker, and the Prophet Elias. Our Lord often appears as an old man, or as the most wretched and shabby of beggars. This is quite in accordance with Eastern ideas. The Western Church dwells on the little child, the beautiful youth, the perfection both of youth and maturity at the age of thirty-three. There is a popular phrase, as at Amiens "le beau Dieu." "Thou art fairer than the children of men," says the West. The East replies, "He has neither form nor comeliness, and when we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him," and even represents Him as deformed. The ideas of the Ancient of Days, of Eternity, of the Divine Wisdom, are all sympathetic with the figure of an old man. But the Russian Christ is a great figure of charity. We like the story in which He gives a soldier a pack of cards with which he will win whenever he plays. The Biblical East invokes the Saints of the Old Testament. "In Novgorod," Mr. Magnus tells us, "there were two churches, to St. Elias of the Drought, and St. Elias of the Rain, to be consulted as occasion required." St. James tells us "Elias . . . prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months, and he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." (St. James V., 17-18). There is no specific place of Purgatory in the Eastern dogma, but in these tales people who are "good in the main" (as an old friend of the writer expresses it), but unsatisfactory in details of conduct, go to hell for a

time. Death is personified as in the Breton figure of the "Ankou," but in Russia the personification is feminine. A very curious piece of folk-lore is that, as long as Death stands at the foot of the sick person's bed he may recover, but if she stands at the head, there is no hope.

The "Byliny Book" is a book of the past, a book of "what has been," a book of ballads and sagas about the mythical heroes of Russia, Ilya and Mikúla and the rest. Miss Harrison, in her preface, tells us about the village minstrels in far-away places singing these songs on winter nights. She tells us that the young people will not learn to sing these songs because they are "grammar people," who can read books themselves. "What a pity!" she adds, and for our part we quite agree with her. The "Russian Picture Tales," charmingly illustrated by Valery Carrick, are concerned entirely with the doings of animals. Animals play a great part in all the books, and are always regarded as persons. The crow is addressed as "Voron Voronovitch," as who should say "Crow Crowson." A crow of evil omen is a common Russian expression, an exact rendering of the Italian "corvo di mal augurio." Mr. Curtin gives a delightful story of a talking cat who "told tales about deacons and priests." We should like to possess this cat, and should much enjoy its company. The cock in these stories is always a bird of good omen, and generally manages to get his own way.

We extract the following note from the much-scribbled margin of a copy of a "Commentary on the Psalms," which is the most prized of all our books:—

"There is an ancient Russian story that in the middle of the night when the Angels take the sun from the Throne of God and carry it to the East, the cherubims strike with their wings, and on earth every bird palpitates with joy, and the cock awakes, and beats his wings prophesying light to the world."

Mr. Magnus give a version of this story, which is of ancient origin; "the language," he says "is very antique."

But we think more charming than such fancies is the story of the Tsarevna, who sought for her lost Tsar, disguised as a wandering guslyár, or player of the gusli, a kind of dulcimer. The word "gusli" suggests some lovely instrument, made for wild Russian music.

We have lingered so long in the Russian Wonderland, that we have little time to explore the wonderlands that stretch beyond it to the South and East. Miss Lucy M. Garnett, for instance, gives us a charming collection of "Ottoman Wonder Tales." The East, the country of the "Thousand-and-One Nights," is, of course, the classic land, the lone home of wonder-tales. All over the East the vocation of the story-teller still flourishes. He may, in fact, be occasionally heard in the Italian towns of the Adriatic coast. These stories of Miss Garnett's are literally "tales that are told." They end in this kind of way, as the story-teller makes his bow to his listeners:—"The whole city feasted for forty days and forty nights, the sky rained honey, and the streams flowed wine, and didn't they just enjoy themselves, your honors." A great feature of Eastern legend is the dwelling on the splendor and wisdom of Solomon, the great magician, the possessor of the ring engraved with the Divine name, the Master of the Djinns, understanding the language of all birds and beasts. Mr. R. H. Nassau calls his very interesting collection of West African folk tales "Where Animals talk." They talk in all the wonder-tales of all the wonder-lands. They play a great rôle, especially in India. Mr. Mackenzie and Shovona Devi, a niece of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, have given us two fascinating and valuable collections of Indian folk-tales, which reflect the whole phantasmagoria of India—tales in which animals are as often the persons of the drama as men and women, and in and out of which move "the Hawk," "the King Snake," "the Golden Parrot," "the Hermit Cat," "the Monkey Bridegroom," "the Monkey Giant-Killer," "the Vain Camel," and the like. Mr. Nassau gives, by the way, a curious West African tale of "The Savior of the Animals." He was named by his parents "One Who Saves People." He used to release captive birds and beasts from snares. He was compelled by his father to climb an excessively high cocotree, and found he was unable to descend. He lingered for some time in the tree, and then died in it, the birds and beasts refusing to attempt to lend him any assistance.

BOOKS FOR BOYS.

- "Under French's Command." By Captain BRERETON. (Blackie. 3s. 6d.)
- "In Khaki for the King." By ESCOTT LYNN. (Chambers. 5s.)
- "The Invisible War-Plane." By CLAUDE GRAHAME-WHITE, and HARRY HARPER. (Blackie. 3s. 6d.)
- "The Fight for Constantinople." By PERCY F. WESTERMAN. (Blackie. 2s. 6d.)
- "A Sub of the R.N.R." By PERCY F. WESTERMAN. (Partridge. 6s.)
- "Stubbs and I." By FRANK FORTUNE. (Chambers. 5s.)
- "The Steamship Glory." By FREDERICK NIVEN. (Heinemann. 3s. 6d. net.)
- "The Secret Seven." By WARREN BELL. (Black. 3s. 6d.)
- "The School of Arms." By ASCOTT R. HOPE. (Routledge. 3s. 6d.)
- "The Book of the Thin Red Line." By H. NEWBOLT. (Longmans. 5s. net.)

THE flood of war stories was expected. Here was the theme that clamored most insistently for attention, and lent itself most readily to the boys'-book writer's hand. All that was necessary for the publishers was to "call for our chiefest men of discipline, to cull the plots of best advantage," and the thing, in the hands of such "men of discipline" as Captain Brereton, Mr. Claude Grahame-White, and Mr. Percy F. Westerman, was as good as done. One marvels at the facility of these stories, interwoven as they are with actual events, so recent and so poignant that one would have thought they had choked the utterance.

Not a bit of it. Captain Brereton, in "Under French's Command," is as unembarrassed as if he were writing, say, about the Indian Mutiny. The beginning is cunningly sinister. M. Lemoine, of Ypres, trusted by his fellow-citizens as a good Belgian, looks out of his window in the Grande Place, and apostrophizes in language that shows him to be a German spy with a pretty taste in melodrama. Presently a British airman swoops unpleasantly close to the peep-hole, and Lemoine recognizes him: "That man! That officer! The one I have followed so often and have failed to kill! Then he is in these parts again—he, the one who has so often foiled us, who wrecked our aerodrome at Cologne and killed our brothers. So, Fletcher—yes, that is the name, Captain in the British Army." From this we know that Captain Jim Fletcher will figure considerably in the story as the recipient of hostile attentions from Lemoine, *alias* Meyer; and so he does, mainly in the company of his young cousin, Norman Beamish. Norman starts his military career as a despatch rider; but he arrives at Neuve Chapelle just in time to take part in the famous battle, and afterwards he is with Fletcher in many a daring aircraft enterprise. There is a second villain, Fritz, the half-brother of Norman, who after some unpleasant family disturbances joins forces with Lemoine, and aids him in a nearly successful attempt to kidnap our two heroes. Captain Brereton makes no mistakes in the telling. The story rushes along, to the boom of artillery and the rattle of machine guns.

The adventures of Oliver Hastings and Vivian Drummond, who escape from Frankfort at the beginning of the war, and after a sojourn with the Belgian Army take part in the Great Retreat from Mons, are the subject of Mr. Lynn's book. Certainly Mr. Lynn has stuck at nothing to render his work interesting to the boy reader. He makes free with the names of the Army leaders, English and French, in a calm, deliberate, whole-hogger way, that leaves one gasping at his audacity. There is even an interview with the Kaiser, when Hastings and Drummond have the misfortune to fall into the enemy's clutches. But the adventure ends happily. "Go," said the Emperor; "you are free. Return to your countrymen, and tell them that William of Germany can be as generous as George of England." A few sentences later, however, the author feels it necessary not to give William credit for too much magnanimity. The liberated men are hurried into a waiting motor car by a gentlemanly German who has befriended them:—

"But the Emperor," said Vivian, as he grasped the steering wheel—"I should like to thank him. I should—"

"Go; go instantly, *before he alters his mind*," said von Lenz, and, without even shaking hands, he ran back to the car in which Oliver and Vivian had ridden . . .

"By Jove! The Kaiser has some sporting characteristics, after all," said Oliver."

The "sporting characteristics" do not seem quite to follow from von Lenz's testimonial to his royal master, but doubtless Oliver was in a mood to say anything to fill a line. At any rate, the two friends are released for some seventy more pages of stirring life, culminating at the Neuve Chapelle fight, where they are both wounded badly enough to be sent home. It is a good story, and the dialogue between the great Allied Generals is specially enjoyable.

A bit of mechanical science is always welcomed by boys, and nobody can supply this better or more authoritatively than Mr. Grahame-White. The invisible war-plane of his story does not come into action until late in the book, when it is usefully employed in foiling a Zeppelin raid on London; much, however, happens before that, including a most exciting flight to Heligoland. The indispensable German spy is not dispensed with; he crops up early at the aeroplane works on Langley Plain, where the war-plane is being constructed, abducts the really remarkable professor who invented it, and pursues an erratic course of ubiquitous daring, until he is cornered, when, we must admit, he dies game. How the Zeppelins, having been allowed to reach London, were put out of action by the destruction of their electric power, and were afterwards bombed by the Professor, who never missed anything—this would be too much to tell. The book is carefully wrought. The descriptions of the flights o'er sea and land are well done, and the book contains at least one suggestion for inventors, and another for Sir Percy Scott.

There is a touch of science, too—submarine science we may call it—in Mr. Westerman's two capital tales, "The Fight for Constantinople" and "A Sub of the R.N.R." The first describes how Dick Crosthwaite, appointed sub-lieutenant on the "Hammerer," expects a period of dreary North Sea duty, and is pleasantly surprised to find his ship is bound for the Dardanelles; how he took part in the initial bombardment and the "Calder's" desperate dash up the Narrows; how he is left behind by a landing party, together with Midshipman Sefton, is captured by the Turks, escapes, and after wandering about Gallipoli, is picked up by the crew of a British submarine, *en route* for the Golden Horn. Most of the action of "A Sub of the R.N.R." takes place in the homeland, or, at any rate, in home waters; the raids on Yarmouth and Scarborough and the running fight in which the "Blücher" was sunk are the chief historic happenings. Sandwiched between these are a multitude of non-historic but not less exciting episodes, in which the Sub, Terence Aubyn, plays an important part. In Major von Eckenhardt, Mr. Westerman has fashioned a particularly resourceful German spy. This worthy is first discovered trying to cripple the engines of the merchant steamer "Saraband," reappears as a Scottish laird who extracts important secrets from young British naval officers by means of open-handed hospitality, until he is unmasked by our Sub; and, finally, gets killed in an attempt to blow up a troop train. To his genius for escape and for self-rehabilitation there has seldom been the like. The North Sea battle is quite convincingly told, and the Scarborough raid might easily have been done from the life.

Spies and still more spies occupy the attention in Mr. Fortune's story. "Stubbs and I" are two Boy Scouts, who regard the Great War as a heaven-sent opportunity for doing something useful. After being practised on as "wounded" by Red Cross ladies—which does not satisfy their ambitions—they tumble into an adventure with a territorial guard and a bomb on a railway viaduct; it is quite a mild bomb, and the miscreant who puts it there is not very formidable, but the incident serves as a beginning, and from that time onwards our Scouts are hardly ever out of trouble. For putting up a telescope tripod on the beach without leave—a most un-Scoutlike proceeding—and talking German, they are arrested as spies and popped into a fortress, where they encounter some real German spies, and are able to frustrate their machinations. Released from this adventure, they turn their attention to a certain house on the hill, where lives a suspicious Count whom the authorities have forgotten to intern. The catching of the Count takes some doing, but it is done, and after a series of minor happenings a grand prospect unfolds itself to the boys in the shape of a visit to Belgium. Word has been received that Stubbs's father is lying wounded at a farmhouse somewhere within the German lines—a powerful incentive to dare

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untold risks. Here the benevolent Belgian steps in, and with his co-operation, the boys sail across in a cargo boat, land somewhere between Dunkirk and Ostend, and after hair-breadth escapes from German patrols, find the wounded Colonel Stubbs and bring him safe home. Mr. Fortune takes the probabilities at a jaunty stride; but what matter, so long as he keeps the story moving briskly?

Mr. Frederick Niven's book and that of Mr. Warren Bell remove us for a breathing space from the romantic arena of the war. "The S.S. Glory" is sheer realism—just the record of a cattle-boat's voyage from Montreal to Liverpool, and that record less of the ship than of the sayings and feelings of the crew. They are an unfamiliar race who besiege the wharf of "The St. Lawrence Shipping and Transport Co., Ltd.," seeking jobs as cattle tenders; one would call them the dregs of civilization but for the evidence of gold among the dregs. They quarrel among themselves, like Bret Harte's men of the untamed West, and like these have their own codes of honor and of humor; but there is hardly one of the cosmopolitan gang who is not, temperamentally, an outcast. Mr. Niven writes of them with intimacy, and has the knack of blending them with their surroundings, the busy wharf, the wild Atlantic sea, the mid-ocean stars, the cattle-reeking ship. It is all realistic, but the realism is poetic. Mr. Bell's "The Secret Seven" is another of his "Grey-house" school stories, and a sequence of episodes rather than a continuous narrative. The author is a student of schoolboy ingenuity, and his interest in the subject is communicated to his readers by means of a light and not unhumorous style of writing. The first story in the book, telling how Fender, "a small fishy-eyed fellow, who wore spectacles and didn't play games requiring quickness of sight," played other games at the expense of his school-fellows, is one of the most entertaining. How Savatard turned the tables on the boys who attempted to hold him up to ridicule, is almost equally good. There are pathetic boys, like the un-heroic and slow-witted Hackenphiller, whom Mr. Bell portrays with sympathy, and the masters, including even the foreign ones, are not caricatures. Altogether, "The Secret Seven" gives us much to be thankful for.

The stories in "The School of Arms" are of young heroes who have been. The struggles with Redskins in the American backwoods, the wars of the French Revolution, the Peninsular War, the Belgian uprising of 1830, the Crimean, Austro-Prussian, and Franco-German Wars, and others such as the brief struggle between Texas and Mexico in the early nineteenth century, all furnish their quota. We may select "A Belgian Patriot" as one of the best; the hero of this is Henri Conscience, author of "The Conscript," and the most famous Belgian novelist of his time. Conscience had no warlike ardor, and the rough edges of military life were a sore trial to one of his shrinking temperament; but he was made of the real patriot metal, and won through. A final chapter deals with "Young Heroes of To-Day." We all have heard something of their exploits by sea and land; of the young French scout who suffered death at the hands of his German captors rather than reveal a French position, of the Belgian boy who, single-handed, captured a burly Uhlan; of the Russian lad of twelve who crept into the German lines by night, and returned with the breech-screws of several of their guns. It is good, however, to have them collated in a volume as proof that the heroic ensigns and middies of yesterday are not unrivalled in pluck by their modern counterparts.

"The Book of the Thin Red Line"—a magic title—is fashioned of similar historical material, and there are few boys who will be sorry to become acquainted with the lives of the six good men related herein. Robert Blakeney, the "youngest subaltern on record," went through the retreat of Sir John Moore's Army—"The most famous and terrible march ever made by the British Army until the great Retreat from Mons to Paris in 1914"—and was present at Corunna; and John Colborne was at the side of Moore when he died. The adventures of Harry Smith, of "George," and of James Outram are concerned with nineteenth-century campaigns in India and Afghanistan. Last, but not least, comes Stonewall Jackson, the great general of the Confederates in the American Civil War, the hero of Bull Run and Chancellorsville. His tactical genius is best summed up by a legend made by his men. "Stonewall died," they

said, "and two angels came down from heaven to take him back with them. They went to his tent. He was not there. They went to the hospital. He was not there. They went to the outposts. He was not there. They went to the prayer-meeting. He was not there. So they had to return without him; but when they reported that he had disappeared, they found that he had made a flank march, and reached heaven before them." What he accomplished by his flank marches on earth is well told in this story of one of the world's really great generals.

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Boys have short memories. Their realization of the present is correspondingly intense, and what a present it is! To them, last year is always the remote past, the year before last some dim, forgotten, prehistoric time. For us "grown-ups," with our different time-values, the war is but an interlude; it began only seventeen short months ago; its end is only a matter of a few months more, perhaps. But a schoolboy sees it all quite differently. Any other state of affairs he does not remember at all, or only vaguely. To him, war must seem the normal thing. He might almost suppose that the invention and energy of mankind had no other purpose. And, of course, to his splendid imagination war is romance itself. This is the compensation; and it must be admitted that even modern war has not lost the primitive glamor. With all its science and machinery, and its stupendous scale, it has become less easy to understand; that is the chief difference. To have the most elementary notions about the events that are now monopolizing the attention of all of us, young or old, requires quite a serious amount of general scientific knowledge. Hence, the usual batch of instructive boys' books this Christmas season are devoted in the main to war and the engines and methods of war. These terrible days are providing an immense object-lesson in applied science and communal effort; and though we should naturally prefer some less awful incentive to youthful learning, it cannot be denied that the incentive does happen to be exceptionally powerful.

Captain A. H. Atteridge has himself all a boy's freshness and liveliness of interest. His little book on "The Army" is quite a model of what a boy's book should be. It is crisp and clear, full of "ripping" illustrations, both plain and colored; and tells just what is wanted, and very little else. It deals with the Army, not as an institution, and in a stale, old-fashioned, encyclopaedic way, but objectively and realistically, as consisting of the young readers' daddies, uncles, and brothers fighting the Germans this very month, over there in France, or in training here in England. A youngster, after reading this little book will have, very likely, a better understanding of the day's news in the morning papers than his sedate elders to whom he looks up for explanations. It will tell him all about entrenchments, traverses, wire-entanglements, bomb-proof shelters, and such things, and there are excellent photographs to show him exactly what they look like. He will learn about shrapnel and high-explosive shell, and about every kind of gun that is used by our army, its construction, and the particular purpose it is used for—from the 18-pounders of our Field Artillery to the 4.7 inch guns and howitzers. From the infantry and artillery he will go on to the engineers and the "public works" side of war; to the Army Service Corps and the Red Cross, the telegraphists and the flying men. Then he will have a full and exact description of a modern battle in this new trench-warfare, from the preliminary bombardment to the assault and the consolidation of positions

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Mr. Berridge divides his book into chapters of animal aviators, grotesques, fish out of water, animals that express emotion, and so on, so that one not only reads of many wonders, but gets them classified into a sort of philosophy. He does the aye-aye less than justice when he says that all its fingers have that extreme attenuation that really makes only one on each hand a remarkable probing instrument, and he is not correct in saying that the large copper butterfly is extinct to the world. These are trifling errors only found because the book is so interesting that the reviewer has been compelled to read every word of it.

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"For the bush is a tree, as you can see,
And it isn't cold, and it's afternoon,
And so you can tell the man in the moon,
It's a cold and frosty morning."

His dandelion song is as follows:—

"What's o'clock, what's o'clock?
Count and let's see.
One o'clock, two o'clock,
One, two, and three.
Three o'clock, four o'clock,
Five o'clock, — tea."

"Nanny shouts five o'clock,
Five o'clock tea,
Come quick and change your frock,
Hurrah for five o'clock,
Five o'clock tea."

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They are all of them thoroughly well known, and if we did not know exactly how their games went, we should do so on reading the book. The reviewer did not make such good whistles from the willow as he will do now that he has read Mr. Robertson's recipe. A very clear cut shows exactly how it should be done; another does the same for the walnut-shell boat, and everywhere the handiwork of a very efficient uncle is seen.

Miss Klickmann's volume is artistic and literary. It makes a handsome gift-book, being full of colored pictures on brown paper mounts, reminiscent of summer joys. There are primrose woods, bluebell woods, old English flower gardens, Devonshire cottages, Downland views, moated manors, and many other types of scenery collected into suitable chapters. Every page is illustrated with admirable vignettes by C. J. Vine and others, and Mr. Hayward Young is mainly responsible for the rich and inspiring colored sheets. The book also owes a great deal to both the pen and the pencil of Miss Maude Angell.

THE CHRISTMAS BUNDLE.

- "Bubble and Squeak." By HARRY GOLDING, illustrated by THOMAS MAYBANK. (Ward, Lock. 1s. net.)
 "Little Mousie Crusoe." By MAY BYRON; pictures by ERNEST ARIS. (Cassell. 1s. net.)
 "A Box of Crackers," and "A Basket of Plums." Pictures by LAWSON WOOD, verses by RICHARD WAYLETT. (Gale & Polden. 1s. each.)
 "Sir Francis Duck, Adventurer," and "Bunkum Brown, Bandit." By ERNEST ARIS. (Gale & Polden. 1s. each.)
 "Flippity, the Runaway." Pictured and related by ANGUSINE MACGREGOR. (Blackie. 1s. 6d.)

I.

THE Christmas bundle this year resembles another bundle—the Balkan one; for no sooner has the diplomatic reviewer decided that any part of this territory in THE NATION belongs to one volume than it turns out to be the legitimate aspiration of another. But at last we have made up our mind; and if this be secret diplomacy, we cannot help it. We are going to pretend to the books that they are soldiers and we their Brigadier. We are in sole command; we shall write our own despatches; the honors shall be awarded for merit alone; and it now only remains to hope that the Censor will be in a good temper, or have mislaid his blue pencil.

This is a brilliantly accoutred corps; not a hitch of khaki among them all; and the Brigadier fears that, whether for that reason or another, the nursery will not be "taken." Oddly enough, the most likely D.S.O. seems to be "Flippity, the Runaway." This is because Miss Angusine MacGregor has put such very jolly pictures into her little tale of a pet rabbit. Molly, to whom Flippity belonged, is a duck, and so are Flippity and Flaps, the dog. The other units in the Division are rather careless in their work. Bubble and Squeak are silly, unattractive names for two little boys, and the clothes that the boys wear are to match. But the idea of the Noah's Ark animals is amusing, and the picture of soldiers marching in very close formation is good. Mr. Ernest Aris has illustrated and written two books, and has also done the pictures for Miss May Byron's "Little Mousie Crusoe." The best of the trio is "Bunkum Brown," but none seems quite to have got the range. We fancy that the nursery trench will successfully resist the attack from these, and also from Mr. Lawson Wood's and Mr. Richard Waylett's somewhat mixed ammunition, which seems to have been got together anyhow, for anyone.

II.

- "Fairies from Flowerland." By OLGA LINDBERG. Illustrated in color by ELSIE ANNA WOOD. (Duckworth. 2s. 6d.)
 "The Kingdom of the Winding Road." By CORNELIA MEIGS. Illustrated by FRANCES WHITE. (Macmillan. 5s. net.)
 "Those Mysterious Children." By DOROTHY RUSSELL. Illustrated in color by HONOR C. APPLETON. (Blackie. 3s. 6d.)
 "The Independence of Claire." By Mrs. G. DE HORNE VAIZEY. (Religious Tract Society. 3s. 6d.)
 "At School with the Roundheads." By ELSIE OXENHAM. (Chambers. 3s. 6d.)

- "Margery Dawe." By KATHARINE TYNAN. (Blackie. 6s.)
 "The Child of the Sea." Re-told by S. R. LITTLEWOOD. Illustrated by HONOR C. APPLETON. (Simpkin, Marshall. 5s. net.)

The Second Regiment of the First Division will attack the Girls' Schoolroom Trench, by firelight, at tea-time.

These are for all ages, from seven to seventeen. "Fairies from Flowerland" will, we fear, be only half-successful in the attack, for the pictures are commonplace and gaudy, and the stories rather insipidly "pretty," though there is now and then an amusing fancy, as in "Betty in Cloudland," where everything is grey, including a plate of strawberries and cream. There are lots of princes and princesses, and a little girl who lives alone in a house where the floors are of cheese and a chair is made of butter—so that, as the walls are bread, she is never without something to eat. But will children like the notion of eating what they have sat in and trodden on? We rather hope not; the battle in the schoolroom might then assume a confused aspect from the Brigadier's point of view.

"The Kingdom of the Winding Road" is an entirely successful cycle of stories bound together by the magic-working figure of a wandering, piping beggarman. The many colored and uncolored pictures are nearly all attractive, and the whole has just the right mixture of romance and morality. This book is awarded a D.S.O. for the schoolroom engagement.

"Those Mysterious Children" has the charming Mrs. Molesworth touch. It is told by Daphne (who is rather ashamed of her fine name), and very gaily and tenderly does she prattle about the mysterious children, who turned out to be—but this is a military secret, and the Censor's blue pencil will certainly come down upon us if we let it out. The frontispiece, which reappears on the wrapper, is very much the best of Miss Appleton's pictures in this book.

Mrs. de Horne Vaizey has written a school story from the mistress's point of view, and a most agreeable diversion it makes, though there is a good deal of seriousness, even a degree of tragedy, in this tale of the pretty Claire who will not be a burden on her kind step-father. Claire comes out of the trial resplendently, but two of her fellow-mistresses are left in sadness and anxiety. There are truth, feeling, humor, and unflagging zest in this story, which is almost a novel, and, indeed, is more interesting and more vital than many a volume which comes bearing that blazon on its title-page. Seventeen will want Mrs. Vaizey to have at least the Military Cross, and Mrs. Vaizey shall have it.

Ten wants something for "At School with the Roundheads." This also takes a new angle from which to show school-life. A series of opportune epidemics causes three little girls to share in the teaching, and, so far as may be, live the life of a boys' school—the "Roundheads" are the close-cropped boys, as contrasted with the long-locked girls. Perhaps the girls are a little too potent an influence; they "boss the show," as it were; but this is the feminine tradition, and the three girls are cleverly characterized. About the boys we have our doubts; still they are quite as nice as more credible creatures would have been, and Ten shall have her mention in despatches for Miss Oxenham.

Mrs. Katharine Tynan's book is simply enormous, and in all its externalities rather heavy and unattractive. But the story is in her best manner—moving, touching, graceful, and full of pleasant country scenes. It begins in tragedy and wrath, breaks through to better things, in the climax takes us back to darkness for a while, but all ends happily, and Margery Dawe will marry her faithful Denys Adair. Though without the freshness of Mrs. de Horne Vaizey's, this tale should win the heart of a more subdued and dreamy Seventeen.

With "The Child of the Sea" we come to a dreadful admission on our own account. Here is a re-telling of the old story of Amadis and Oriana, the "best of prose romances," says Mr. S. R. Littlewood in the preface; and he adds that his children seemed to agree with him. Shamedly we have to confess that we do not; we could not read the story through. But these things are a matter of—we know not what precisely; we only know that this is a kind of story which at no time in our life have we been able to read. "The old chivalric romances," where all is outside the possible, yet is not faerie . . . for some

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minds they are supreme in captivation; and we are ready to acknowledge the inferiority of ours. No doubt there is many and many a child who would delight in "The Child of the Sea," and even we must grant to Miss Appleton the dreamy prettiness of her pictures; to Mr. Littlewood his skilful adaptation; and to the publishers their silken-paged good taste.

On the whole, the Schoolroom Trench may be said to have been gained, but there is a good deal of work still undone in the Nursery one. Perhaps the Second Division will accomplish it, for in this are seven regiments which we held in reserve, because of their somewhat different traditions. Though they, too, were designed to storm those difficult trenches, it was felt that they would do it best at an hour when some veterans could support them.

III.

The Drawing-room Trench is the next to be assaulted. To this attack a motley little regiment advances, at the children's hour.

"**A Child's Day.**" Verses by WALTER DE LA MARE. Pictures by CARINE and WILL CADBY. (Constable. 2s. net.)

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Mr. De la Mare's book is a D.S.O. already, and we expect great things again from it in the Nursery engagement. Here is an action that the veterans can help in, for poetry must be "read out," if it is to capture the babies' hearts. And to read out the poetry and then point Blue-Eyes to the photographs of this delightfully "like-myself" Elizabeth Ann will be an engagement that no Mummy, Daddy, or Auntie could be in a hurry to break off.

"Little birds bathe
In the sunny dust,
Whether they want to
Or not, they *must*" . . .

The passage which thus begins is a pure enchantment, and there are many to match, though, to our thinking, none to surpass it and its accompanying picture. "Josephine and her Dolls" is the other unit which we rely on for winning the nursery-action. Its limitation is that it will conquer chiefly girls; but with half the ground captured, there can at least be a hopeful *communiqué*. Though the letterpress is engaging, the pictures are the business here; Miss Appleton has done better with them than with any of her other work that we have seen this Christmas. The two sheets showing Josephine's sixteen dolls—and in this instance, the "story" is equally important—are the great attraction. No little girl, and few grown-up ladies, will be able to resist such a diversion.

Here we have another D.S.O. ready-made. A great many of us knew and loved "Bill the Minder" of old, but there must be some who did not, and they will now. There are 130 pictures, and all of them are fascinating. This veteran needs no other veterans to help him—he can do it by himself; and what he does is to invade the Nursery with Big-Brother-of-Eleven holding to his hand, and collect the real inhabitants of the trench around them both, to see the pictures. Then the rest is easy, except for a moment's passive resistance from the girls, for they do not think that Boadicea, the only daughter of the Mushroom-Gatherer, should, even in war-time, have been set to clean the boots. But they suppose that Mr. Heath Robinson got confused by the shelling, and so they forgive him, just this once, and surrender.

The Queen of Roumania's long story is very melancholy. It is very pretty too, but we think that the number of deaths, and the company of ghosts, and the grey, tearful eyes which drive Eric Gundian mad and set him off upon his lugubrious long quest . . . we think that all these are a trifle morbid and anemic. The Seventeen who should pore upon the "Dreamer of Dreams" would need a little iron before long. Seventy could bear this *larmoyante* tale more stoutly on her bent shoulders, for it is of disillusionment all compact; the upshot is that when joy comes to us, the only safe thing to do is to die. This is not well, nor can

all the wistful graces of "Carmen Sylva's" manner make it seem so. Mr. Edmund Dulac has been infected; his pictures are uninspired and unilluminating.

IV.

"**Songs for Little People.**" By NORMAN GALE. Illustrated by HELEN STRATTON. (Constable. 1s. net.)

"**My Friend Phil.**" By ISABEL MAUD PEACOCKE. With colored plates by MARGARET TARRANT. (Ward, Lock. 3s. 6d.)

"**Morals for the Young.**" By MARCUS. With a foreword by WILLIAM J. LOCKE. Illustrated by GEORGE MORROW. (Lane. 2s. net.)

"**Four-and-Twenty Blackbirds.**" By EDWARD THOMAS. (Duckworth. 2s. 6d. net.)

All these books, except the last, are of the "About-Children" class. Mr. Norman Gale's "Songs for Little People" comes to us in a new edition, with designs by Helen Stratton. The author tells us that he has endeavored to attract children up to the ages of fourteen and fifteen, as well as very much younger ones. No doubt the book has won its spurs, but to us, if that is so, children will afford a new surprise. These verses seem to fall between two, or more, stools. They have not the gaiety, the simplicity, nor the cunning, alluring "difficulty" of such work as Mr. De la Mare's in the same sort; nor have they the tenderness of lyrics written frankly to express the older human being's self-conscious delight in childhood. Continually we feel the jar which, for example, comes from these lines in a little girl's song about her pet dove:—

"With corn and bread,
She is tenderly fed;
And only her crop
Need compel her to stop" . . .

There is something hopelessly "wrong" about that, by every criterion; and the kind of wrongness recurs perpetually. Miss Helen Stratton's designs are over-elaborate, and but rarely decorative in the true sense of the word.

"My Friend Phil" is a very charming study of a normal, honest, spontaneous little boy, as square and straight as his attractive portraits. But it is, again, one of those books which fall between two stools, since for grown-ups it is, naturally, a trifle babyish, and for babies certainly a trifle grown-up. The narrator's love-affair would be tedious to children, for Millicent's coquetries are of a kind which they could not understand. But there is unquestionable charm in the delineation of Phil, and much freshness of invention in the episodes which display him.

"Morals for the Young" will divert the Drawing-room Trench, and devastate the Nursery one, if it is allowed to get there. The rhymed aphorisms are in the manner of Mr. Hilaire Belloc's still more subversive "morals" in the same *genre*, but they fall far short of his in wit and rich invention. Some of the "Precepts for the Nursery" strike us as really bad and dangerous. For instance:—

"When playing with a younger boy,
Don't rudely snatch away his toy.
A Christian child's forbearance show,
And bite his ear till he lets go."

The "pawkiness" there is much too pawky; with a belligerent, literal nephew—and such have been known to exist—we feel that we should think it wise to suppress that page. Mr. George Morrow's pictures are now and then amusing enough. But, on the whole, we regard "Morals for the Young" as superfluous.

"Four-and-Twenty Blackbirds" are baked in a rather puzzling, but distinctly alluring, pie by Mr. Edward Thomas. In twenty-four tiny tales he fancifully traces the origin of as many proverbial sayings, assigning to each its place and time and Onlie Begetter. Now and then we thought we detected a satiric intention, as in "All my eye and Betty Martin," where men refuse to believe true things because they are strange. But this strain is not always present. Just as often the proverb escapes the implication of being "the crystallized idiocy of ages"; and this duality makes the total effect a little vague. But the places and the names and the miniature landscapes make the little volume lovely; something of the soul of England—the real England—breathes from each, refreshing memory and hope. And perhaps, since that is so, Mr. Thomas may be given the V.C., not only for this final action, but for the whole Christmas campaign.

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MYTHOLOGY has become a science so vast in extent, and furnished with so imposing an array of critical commentaries, that the ordinary reader is inclined to run away from the subject with something approaching to terror. Learned professors have busied themselves with the old stories, often with the result that in their hands the things have become instruments of boredom, and it is impossible to mention one of the tales of our childhood without being reminded of its variant in Saghalien or Samoa. There is doubtless a useful purpose in this, provided it be kept in its proper place, and not allowed to intrude upon the enjoyment which young people of all ages may get from these old stories. Fortunately, this is the case with nearly all the books at the head of this review, though Mr. Spence's work is intended for students rather than for young people. The latter are more than likely to be frightened off by the statement in his preface that in the book "the religious history of ancient Egypt has been reviewed in the light of the science of modern mythology." By skipping the introduction, however, and by paying little heed to "the science of modern mythology," the persevering reader will be well rewarded. For in spite of his manifest learning and his references to totemism and fetishism, to Mr. Andrew Lang and Sir James Frazer, Mr. Spence tells the stories of Osiris and of Set, of Hathshepsut, and many others, both familiar and unfamiliar, in a way that the ordinary reader can enjoy. In addition to the myths, and Mr. Spence's interpretation of them, the book contains brief sketches of Egyptian history, manners, and customs. Its scientific value can best be judged by an anthropologist, but as a store-house of myths, it may claim a more general appeal.

Mrs. Lang's book makes no claim to be a fresh contribution to the knowledge of folk-lore, and is none the worse for that. It is a collection of myths, from Prometheus and Pygmalion to Beowulf and Deirdre, told in simple style, but in a way likely to impress the stories on the memories of young people. These old stories have entered so deeply into current thought that constant allusions to them are to be found in every book or newspaper. One of Mrs. Lang's purposes is to make such allusions easily understood, and her book contains many references to modern poetry. For this reason, it is likely to foster a taste for the poets who have made such abundant use of these old stories. Mr. Brooks-Bank and Miss Davidson have treated the same subjects as Mr. Spence and Mrs. Lang, though in simpler form. Their books furnish an alternative choice for givers of Christmas presents who wish to awaken an interest in mythology, and to make young people understand, as Miss Davidson puts it, that "the foolish pagan practice of worshipping many different gods and goddesses may not have been so entirely foolish from the standpoint of primitive peoples." However reprehensible the practice, it has at all events added to the world's stock of entertaining stories.

There is a whole world of romantic associations about the words "piracy upon the high seas." The piratical heroes of our childhood have still a warm corner in most hearts, and we have all lamented when their exploits were ended at Execution Dock, or elsewhere. Mr. Lovat Fraser describes the typical pirate of romance as "a noble, dignified, if gloomy gentleman, with a leaning to Byronic soliloquy. Though stern in exterior, his heart could (and

would) melt at the distresses of the heroine." The book which he has edited paints no such picture. It is a reprint of a pirated edition of Captain Charles Johnson's "General History of the Pirates from their first Rise and Settlement in the Island of Providence to the Present Time; with the Remarkable Actions and Adventures of the two Female Pirates, Mary Read and Anne Bonny," first published in 1724, and one of the authoritative sources for the history of its subject. Its author if not a pirate himself—and Mr. Fraser hints that investigation might have revealed some awkward episodes in his career—was at least able to depend on the information supplied by his friend, William Ingram, "who was a Pirate under Austin, Roberts, and many others," and who was hanged for his exploits in June, 1714.

Captain Johnson omits to mention the illustrious Morgan and several other pirates of fame, but this oversight is rectified by Mr. Davidson, whose "Romance of the Spanish Main" provides "a record of the daring deeds of some of the most famous adventurers, buccaneers, filibusters, and pirates in the Western seas." Here Sir Henry Morgan occupies the place to which he is entitled by fact as well as tradition. His ferocity—which was hardly less than that of Lolonois, the Cruel, or Montbars, the Exterminator—his strength of character, and the extent and duration of his achievements entitle this son of a Welsh farmer to the chief place among the rovers of the Spanish Main. Following a treacherous desertion of his companions, he was brought to trial on the complaint of the King of Spain, a suit which ended with his being knighted by Charles II. and appointed Commissioner of Jamaica. Accounts of his closing years are contradictory, but the probability is that he died peacefully in his bed. Mr. Davidson's book is a good history of the Spanish Main, and includes the deeds of such Elizabethan adventurers as Drake, Hawkins, and Raleigh, as well as of the pirates and buccaneers.

From the pirates to Napoleon is a transition that would have seemed natural to our grandfathers. The present generation is inclined to make him out much more of a hero than he really was, and many books about him are mere uncritical eulogies. Mr. Hudson does not fall into this error of perspective. His aim has been as far as possible to disengage Napoleon's biography from the history of his time, which latter has been treated only as the background and setting of his career. Without attempting to belittle Napoleon's amazing genius, Mr. Hudson's verdict is that "in the high and severe sense of the term, Napoleon as a man was not great." His sensational career appeals to popular imagination, because it offers a spectacle of strength, power, and success, and because it was so intensely dramatic. His personality was so impressive that something like the Napoleonic legend was inevitable. "He was ill-bred," says Mr. Hudson, "he was coarse; he was often brutal; he carried the manners of the camp into the *salon* and the court; but even when he was most hated, feared, or despised, he never failed to dominate." There is an excess of biographies of Napoleon, but Mr. Hudson's serves a special purpose, and is a useful addition to the list.

The third volume of Mrs. O'Neill's history of the war for young people is as satisfying as its predecessors. It begins with an account of the great battles in Flanders, including Neuve Chapelle and St. Eloi, and a capital description of the recapture of the British guns by the Canadians north of Ypres. This is followed by a narrative of what the French have done, and of the fierce struggle on the Russian front, while the two concluding chapters treat of the expedition to the Dardanelles, and the war of the submarines. Mrs. O'Neill has a gift for presenting the salient facts in a clear and easy style, and her narrative is lightened up by a judicious choice of thrilling scenes and episodes. She is both readable and instructive, and her book is sure to be welcomed by young people.

Last upon our list comes an addition to Messrs. Seeley's "Library of Romance," in the shape of Mr. Ibbotson's collection of stories of missionary adventures. The book is well deserving of inclusion in the series, for many of these adventures are as full of thrills as anything to be found in the less trustworthy records of pirates and buccaneers. They range from the Jesuit missionaries of South America and St. Francis Xavier and his companions in Japan, to such modern missionary heroes as Chauncy Maples, Alfred Swann, George Grenfell, and Dr. T. L. Pennell.

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ANNUALS AND OTHERS.

THERE seems to be no falling-off in either the bulk or attractiveness of the Christmas annuals. "Chums" (Cassell, 8s.) is, of course, strong in war stories, but there is a full share of other topics. Mr. Andrew Soutar, Mr. Frank Howel Evans, and Mr. S. Walkey are among the writers of serials; Mr. Theodore Roberts has a number of descriptions of the animals of the wild; and there is the usual store of miscellaneous information about hobbies and pursuits that appeal to boys. "The British Boys' Annual" (5s.) and "The British Girls' Annual" (5s.) from the same publishers, are both well up to standard. In the former Messrs. Grahame-White and Harry Harper give an account of the exploits of British airmen in the war, while the latter has an exciting story by Miss Dorothea Moore, giving the experiences of an English schoolgirl in Germany. For younger children Messrs. Cassell issue "Cassell's Children's Annual" (5s.), with plenty of stories and verses, and illustrations in color and black and white. Two other annuals that have an established reputation are "The Boys' Own Annual" and "The Girls' Own Annual" (The Religious Tract Society, 8s. each). Both are excellently produced, and their readers will have nothing to complain of in the fare provided. "The Sunday at Home" (7s. 6d.), too, can be highly recommended, while "The Stitchery Annual" (1s. net) will prove most useful to older girls. Both are published by the Religious Tract Society. From Messrs. Nelson we have "The Chummy Book" and "The Jolly Book" (3s. 6d. each); and, finally, there is "Blackie's Children's Annual" (Blackie, 3s. 6d.), with literary contributions by Mr. Ian Hay, Mrs. George Wemyss, Miss Agnes Grozier Herbertson, and pictures by Mr. H. M. Brock, Mr. Harry Rountree, and Mr. René Bull.

"The Travelling Companions and Other Stories for Children," by Lady Margaret Sackville (Simpkin, Marshall, 6s. net), made its first appearance nine years ago. It now appears in new and handsomer dress, and with considerable additions. The travelling companions number six, chief among them being Selysette, who is descended, Lady Margaret Sackville assures us, from the foremost fiddler at the Court of King Cole, and plays on the descendant of his fiddle. Their adventures bring them into contact with a poet, a goblin godmother, who is also a princess, pirates, an enchanter, and a profusion of wild beasts. These adventures are supplemented by half-a-dozen original fairy tales. Lady Margaret Sackville is sometimes a thought too sophisticated for perfect success, but children are sure to be interested in the doings of the travelling companions. Miss Florence Anderson has furnished the book with a number of beautiful illustrations. "Fairy Tales," edited by Mr. Harry Golding and illustrated by Miss Margaret Tarrant (Ward, Lock, 3s. 6d.), is a collection of such old friends as "Tom Thumb," "Puss in Boots," and "Cinderella."

"My Book of Best Fairy Tales," selected and edited by Charles S. Bayne (Cassell, 6s. net), and "Grandmother's Fairy Tales," translated by Pia Hewlett from the French of Charles Robert Dumas (Heinemann, 6s. net), are both to be recommended. Mr. Bayne has made a choice of all the old favorites from Grimm, Perrault, and Hans Andersen, as well as from old English sources. As might have been expected from the editor of "Little Folks," the choice is exceedingly well made, and the book is still more attractive by the pictures of Mr. Harry Rountree and the good type which the publishers have chosen—the latter a feature of no little importance in a book for children. M. Dumas's fairy tales have the merit of being new to our nurseries, and though hardly likely to rank with the classics, they have the proper fairy tradition. There are three of them, the adventures of Jack Bruin with a dragon, a giant, and a dwarf, being perhaps the best. These adventures, as well as the other tales, are excellently illustrated by Maurice Lalau. "The Russian Garland" (McBride, Nast, & Co. 3s. 6d. net), edited by Mr. Robert Steele, is a translation from a collection of peasant chap books, made in Moscow about 1830. It is a most attractive store of Russian folklore, and deserves

to rank with the best of the books on the subject which we discuss in another article.

Books published in aid of the various war funds ought not to be neglected at this season. There are several to choose from, "The Blinded Soldiers' and Sailors' Gift Book," edited by Mr. George Goodchild (Jarrold, 3s. net), "The Land of My Fathers: A Welsh Gift Book" (Hodder & Stoughton, 2s. 6d. net), "Scotland for Ever" (Hodder & Stoughton, 3s. net), "The Queen's Gift Book" (Hodder & Stoughton, 2s. 6d. net), "The 'Times' Red Cross Story Book" (Hodder & Stoughton, 1s. 6d. net), to mention only a few. The last on the list is made up of stories by famous novelists serving in the Army or Navy, among whom are Mr. A. E. W. Mason, Mr. A. A. Milne, Mr. Oliver Onions, Mr. W. B. Maxwell, Mr. Compton Mackenzie, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, and Mr. Barry Pain—certainly a distinguished band.

"Odd Creatures," by "Dum-dum" (Constable, 3s. 6d. net), is an agreeable collection of clever verses, illustrated by Mr. George Morrow's pictures. It is concerned with birds, beasts, and fishes, not to mention cats, and oysters, and the sea-serpent, on all of which Captain Kendall exercises his sprightly muse. "The Oyster's Lullaby," and "The Woonin' o' Tummas" are among the best of these efforts.

Stories of adventure are dealt with in another review, but we may here mention a few books belonging to this category which reached us rather late. Mr. E. H. Hampden's "The Little Raja" (Nelson, 2s. 6d.) is crowded with incident, the leading figures being Jai Singh, and Michael and Frieda Carnac, the twin children of Major Carnac of the Political Service. "A Book of the Sea," by Mr. Archibald Williams (Nelson, 3s. 6d.), is not a story-book, but it will be heartily enjoyed by every boy who loves the sea. It treats of tides, currents, icebergs, lifeboats and life-saving apparatus, salvage operations, nautical instruments, submarine cables, and the thousand and one other objects that have so often been the themes or the background of romance. "Fairy Tales that Mother Told," "Dickens Stories for Children," and "Bible Stories for Children" (2s. each) are three additional volumes from Messrs. Nelson that deserve notice.

Reprints are an important feature of the Christmas book trade, and this year there are many that deserve the attention of purchasers. Messrs. Heinemann issue a fine edition of Dickens's "A Christmas Carol" (6s. net), with characteristic illustrations by Mr. Arthur Rackham. From Messrs. Cassell we have Stevenson's "Treasure Island," "Kidnapped," "Catriona," and "The Black Arrow" (3s. 6d. each), all included in "The Empire Library," and decked out in the glory of bold type, colored illustrations, and gay covers. Any or all of these volumes will prove a most acceptable present to most boys. Messrs. Bell are continuing their reissue of Mrs. Ewing's tales, and have added "Mary's Meadow, and Other Tales of Fields and Flowers" to the list. Like its predecessors, it is charmingly illustrated by Miss M. V. Wheelhouse. Mr. George Carline's pictures in color for Mr. Andrew Lang's "Oxford" (Seeley, 12s. 6d. net), help to make a handsome presentation book. War or no war, a reprint of Grimm is a Christmas necessity, and the edition of "Grimm's Fairy Tales," illustrated by Mr. George Soper (Headley, 5s.), is fully adequate to the occasion.

For the baby's stocking Messrs. Dean's Rag Books are indispensable. Their merits are so universally acknowledged and they have become so established an institution, that praise is now unnecessary. We need only say that fresh additions have been made to their number, and that they can be obtained at prices ranging from six shillings to sixpence. Messrs. Gale & Polden publish a set of tiny volumes which, though more perishable than Messrs. Dean's Rag Books, can also be made to slip into a stocking.

